

AZ All-Hazards Communications Unit Training and Recognition Program Update

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Outline



- Overview of the Communications Unit
- Training Updates
 - COML & COMT (Past and Future)
 - Field Day
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 - Training and Recognition Snapshot
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Communications Unit Overview



The Communications Unit (COMU) plays a critical support role within the Incident Command System (ICS). ICS establishes basic principles, practical tools, and a definitive nomenclature and structure for supporting incident-based emergency response.

Positions within the Communications Unit include:

- Communications Unit Leader (COML)
- Communications Unit Technician (COMT)
- Incident Communications Center Manager (INCM)
- Radio Operator (RADO)
- Auxiliary Communications (AUXCOMM)
- Technical Specialist (THSP)
- Message Runner

Communications Unit Leader (COML)



- The Communications Unit Leader (COML) heads the Communications Unit and is responsible for integrating communications and ensuring that operations are supported by communications.
- The COML must understand ICS and local response systems to support the efforts of incident personnel.
 - Manages the technical and operational aspects of the communications function
 - Develops the Incident Radio Communications Plan, ICS Form 205
 - Actively participates in the operational and planning meetings
 - Assists proactively with preplanned events
 - Understands the realities of deployment to emergencies and events
- The COML is responsible for the duties of any unfilled subordinate positions (INCM, COMT, RADO/Tactical Dispatcher) until delegated.

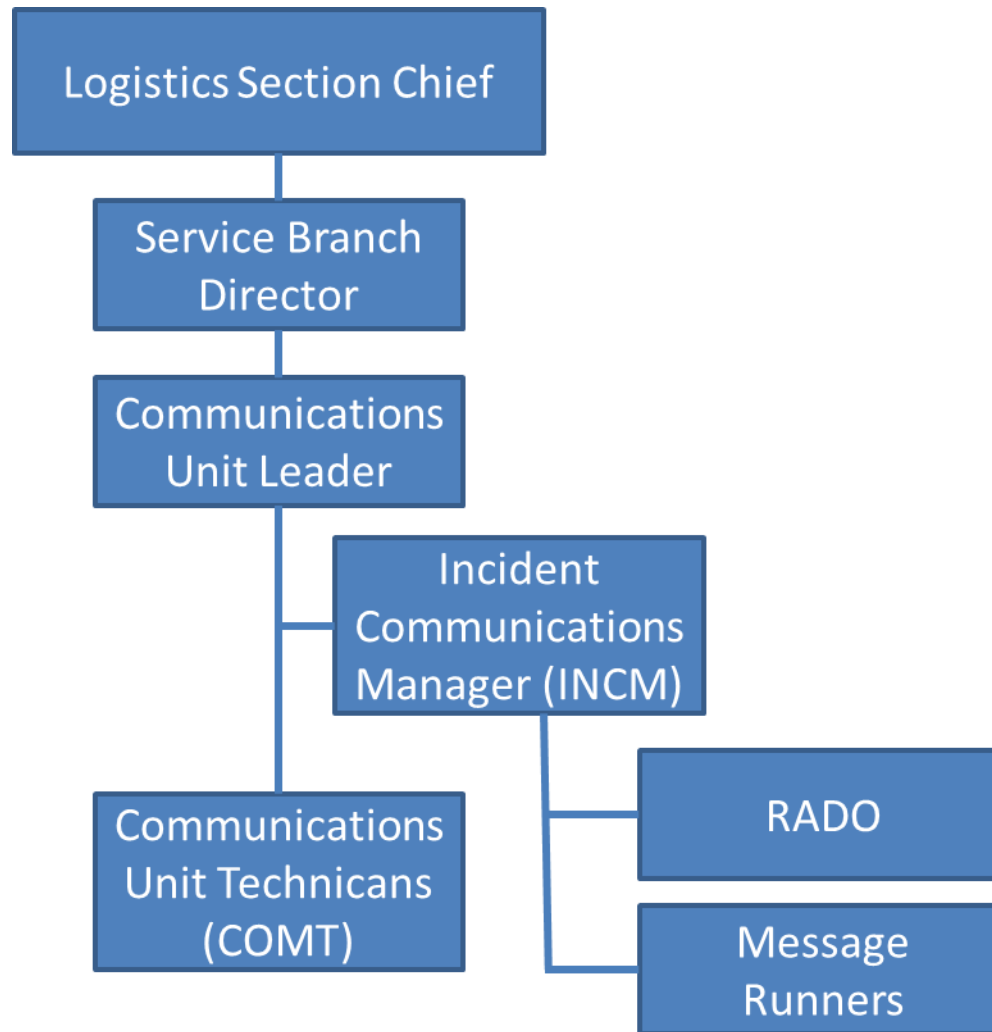
Communications Technician (COMT)



The role of the COMT is to provide for the technical implementation of incident communications systems, which include:

- Providing for equipment distribution
- Tracking equipment
- Training users on use of equipment
- Verifying proper programming of equipment for incident
- Assisting the COML in the development of the ICS 205, Incident Radio Communications Plan

Example Logistics Section Structure



Developing Qualified COMLs and COMTs



- Completion of All-Hazards position training course
 - All-Hazards Course Prerequisite Training
 - » ICS 700
 - » ICS 800
 - » ICS 100
 - » ICS 200
 - » ICS 300 (COML Only)
- Completed and legible All-Hazards Position Taskbook (PTB)
- Evaluator's Verification
- Arizona Agency Certification
- Optional: Arizona Regional All-Hazards Communications Unit Recognition Procedure

COML Training



- The All-Hazards COML course, which is led by two DHS approved COML instructors, trains emergency responders to serve as COMLs during all hazards emergency operations.

6 Classes in 2009

Dates	County (Location)	Funding Source
June 17 – 19, 2009	Maricopa (Phoenix)	Phoenix Fire Federal Grant
July 15 – 17, 2009	Coconino (Flagstaff)	Phoenix Fire Federal Grant
August 5 – 7, 2009	Pima (Tucson)	Phoenix Fire Federal Grant
August 12 – 14, 2009	Maricopa (Phoenix)	Phoenix Fire Federal Grant
August 19 – 21, 2009	Yuma (Yuma)	Phoenix Fire Federal Grant
Sept 29 – Oct 1, 2009	Cochise (Sierra Vista)	Federal Rollout Program

COML Training (cont.)



3 Classes in 2011

Dates	County (Location)	Funding Source
October 17 – 20, 2011	Maricopa (Phoenix)	County ADEM Training Funds
Nov 28 – Dec 1, 2011	Mohave (Kingman)	2010 IECGP
December 5 – 8, 2011	Pima (Tucson)	2010 IECGP

4 Classes in 2012

Dates	County (Location)	Funding Source
February 7 – 10, 2012	Maricopa (Glendale)	EMI Sponsored Course
April 2 – 5, 2012	Cochise (Sierra Vista)	2010 IECGP
April 30 – May 3, 2012	Coconino (Flagstaff)	2010 IECGP
October 22-25, 2012	Yuma (Yuma)	2010 IECGP

Recent COML Training



- During the past year, the PSIC Office collaborated with ADEM and county emergency management offices for **6** additional courses, training **72** additional students :

Dates	County/Location	Funding Source
Jan 26-27 & Feb 2, 2013	Maricopa (Phoenix)	2010 IECGP
Apr 30 – May 2, 2013	Pima (Tucson)	ADEM Training Funds
May 6 – 8, 2013	Pinal (Casa Grande)	2010 IECGP
May 10 – 12, 2013	Maricopa (Phoenix)	2010 IECGP
May 13 – 15, 2013	Yavapai (Prescott)	2010 IECGP
May 14 – 16, 2013	Gila (Globe)	2010 IECGP

- Once a course has been scheduled with ADEM, an announcement is emailed to the Interested Parties and COML Notification lists and posted online at: <http://www.azpsic.gov/library/coml>.
- Qualified participants must register for the COML courses through ERMA and send complete registration forms to psic@azpsic.gov.

County Breakdown of Trained COMLs



- 253 Arizona students have completed the All-Hazards COML course (as of September 2013):

County	Students Trained
Apache	4
Cochise	26
Coconino	14
Gila	3
Graham	1
Greenlee	0
La Paz	1
Maricopa	97

County	Students Trained
Mohave	15
Navajo	5
Pima	42
Pinal	7
Santa Cruz	4
Yavapai	8
Yuma	26

COMT Training



- The All-Hazards COMT course, which is led by two trained and federally recognized COMT instructors, trains emergency responders on practices and procedures common to COMTs during all hazards emergency operations.
- Due to the technical nature of the training, course enrollment is limited to 15 students and is offered by invitation only.
- To date **5** All-Hazards COMT courses have been held in AZ with **82** students trained:
 - October 24 - 28, 2011: Pima County (Tucson)
 - April 9 - 13, 2012: Maricopa County (Phoenix)
 - November 26 - 30, 2012: Maricopa County (Phoenix)
 - April 22 - 26, 2013: Coconino County (Flagstaff)
 - April 29 – May 3, 2013: Yuma County (Yuma)

Arizona Regional Recognition



Once an individual has completed their taskbook, received a final Evaluator's Verification and been certified as a COML or COMT by their Arizona Agency, they are eligible to apply for recognition as an Arizona Regional All-Hazards Communications Unit Leader or Technician

- Application materials are received by the PSIC Office and reviewed for completeness and accuracy – forwarded on to NIMS-Communications Unit (NIMS-CU) Workgroup
- The NIMS-CU Workgroup convenes for an Application Review Meeting (approx. 2 weeks prior to SIEC meeting)
- The Workgroup reviews each candidate's application and submitted documentation and discusses it on its own merits.
- The Workgroup evaluates the submitted documentation on training, exercises, incidents and/or events based on number, depth and complexity.

Arizona Regional Recognition (cont.)



- Candidates granted recognition by the NIMS-CU Workgroup will be issued a document confirming their designation
- Certifying agencies are informed of the recognition by the State
- Candidates granted recognition are added to the Arizona Regional All-Hazards Communications Unit Resource List
- Recognition remains current for three years

Numbers Snapshot



- As of September 2013, the NIMS-CU Workgroup has recognized 20 Arizona Regional All-Hazards COMLs and 5 COMTs.

	COML		COMT	
	Trained	Recognized	Trained	Recognized
Discipline				
Emergency Management	21	5	13	2
Fire	68	6	23	-
Health Care	4	1	1	-
Law Enforcement	74	4	27	3
Other	86	4	18	-
Totals	253	20	82	5
	<i>(from AZ; since 2009)</i>			

- Those recognized represent agencies from 6 counties and are listed on the AZ Regional All-Hazards Communications Resource List on the PSIC website at: <http://www.azpsic.gov/library/coml/>.

Areas Needing Improvement



Current gaps in the program:

- There are currently 9 AZ based COML instructors and two COMT instructors. The lack of COMT instructors both nationally and in Arizona results in a significant cost for delivering the course.
- There is a shortage of recognized COMLs and COMTs to sign off Position Taskbooks (PTB). While Incident Commanders and supervisors can sign off tasks, the lack of recognized COMLs and COMTs results in fewer mentorship opportunities.
- Lack of incident/event opportunities to get the PTB signed
- Lack of continuing education opportunities for renewal candidates
- Lack of awareness of the value of the Communications Unit among executive leadership / incident command
- Lack of awareness of the value of certified COMLs and COMTs to agency operations

Going Forward



- Potential TA requests to support future programs:
 - TRG-COMT TTT: Communications Unit Technician Train-The-Trainer Course (Pg. 27)
 - TRG-COMT: All-Hazards Communications Unit Technician (COMT) Course (Pg. 25)
 - OP-COMLEX: All-Hazards Communications Unit Leader Exercise (Pg. 39)
 - OP-COMMEX: Communications Unit Exercise (Pg. 40)

Communications Unit Training Field Day



- Arizona's first Communications Unit Training Field Day was held Wednesday, February 20th, 2013.
- Planning is now underway for another Field Day to be held early 2014 in Maricopa County utilizing a 2011 SHSGP grant from the Central RAC.
- The Field day will allow emergency responders to hone their skills and capabilities through hands-on training.
- Individuals who have completed a COML or COMT course in Arizona will be invited to this training opportunity.
- Individuals interested in participating on the Event Planning Team should contact Glade Jarman at gjarman@azpsic.gov

Upcoming Trainings



- All five Homeland Security RACs recommended grant funding this cycle for the Communications Unit Training Program.
- Additional All-Hazards COML and COMT courses are being planned for early 2014 pending award of SHSGP funds – potential for up to 5 COML classes and one COMT class.
- The number of offerings will depend on the amount of funds awarded statewide and the actual cost to deliver each opportunity.
- The PSIC Office welcomes suggestions for future offerings of the All-Hazards COML course. When providing feedback, please consider scheduling and logistics:
 - Dates: The course is currently 3 days in length.
 - Location: A training facility that can comfortably accommodate 30 to 50 people (to facilitate group break-out sessions) is required.
 - Attendance: A minimum of 15 students should attend; the maximum number of students is 30.
 - Enrollment: Qualified participants statewide may register for each course.

COML Best Practices Guide



- PSIC Office is developing a COML Best Practices Guide
 - For anyone assigned as a Communications Unit Leader (COML) within the National Incident Management System (NIMS) Incident Command System (ICS)
 - Not intended to act or replace official policy, required training or direction from higher authority
 - To be used as a resource for check lists (personal, pre-deployment and incident) , duties and responsibilities, ICS sample forms and general readiness
- COML Best Practices Guide will be sent out to our NIMS-CU Workgroup for comment and additions and presented at a future meeting.

Executive Leadership Seminar on Public Safety Communications



- Agencies in Arizona and around the country struggle with Incident Commanders understanding the value a COML and/or COMT bring to an event or incident.
- Participants in this seminar will hear from practitioners and subject matter experts on the value of the Communications Unit during multi-agency events, whether large scale preplanned events or rapidly developing incidents managed through the Communications Center.
- Speakers will share lessons learned and use real life examples of what can be accomplished when this role is integrated into events, incidents, training and exercises.
- Executive Leadership Seminar on Public Safety Communications
 - To be held in Phoenix in November 19, 2013.
 - 8:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
 - Suite 300
 - ADOA Building, 100 N 15th Ave, Phoenix, AZ 85007



Other ideas?



Further Discussion/Questions?

Thank You!

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